

I have no confidence in the security or accuracy of the Electronic voting machines being discussed (Diebold and ES&S). Despite the staff speaker's attempt to lull our fears by technical blandishments, the guts of these systems are still inherently unchanged and untrustworthy.

As the election results in Ohio and other states in 2004 so clearly demonstrated, electronic voting machines were unreliable at best and, in my opinion and the opinion of other technically qualified people who examined them, were blatantly fraudulent in their counting of the vote. As a result, these companies have lost what the faith and trust of the American people who know about them.

Computer scientists from Stanford, UC Berkeley, Silicon Valley and today's guest experts as a group have made abundantly clear that, with proprietary secret software and no paper trail, our voting system is in the hands of the corporation, not the people. It is riddled with corruption, easily hacked into and susceptible to partisan Trojan programs. It really doesn't matter what the touchscreen says and without mandatory recounts, it really doesn't matter what the paper ballot says, if the guts of the machine and the guts of the prime tabulator are hidden from public inspection. Anything can be put in and anything else can come out the other end.

People are already disaffected regarding the security and accuracy and validity of their vote. We need and deserve a system that is absolutely secure and not one that has been developed by a company with known partisan affiliations, a history of corrupt software and hiring of felons and a pattern of unreliability.

An "enhanced" version of basically bogus software does not instill confidence. If a house's foundation is riddled with holes, no amount of patches or fixes or fancy paint will resolve the basic problem. This company and its products are not worth the slightest investment of our tax dollars. I urge you to reject these machines and put into place a system that is reliable, traceable, transparent and secure and restore democracy. Given the testimony heard today and the problems that continue to be uncovered from these machines and these companies, any other decision you make will show that you serve another master than the people of California.